



When is a “Reclassification” action a RIF

In the Federal government, reduction in force (RIF) is a term that only applies to very specific situations. The actions covered are listed in 5 CFR 351.201 (2). Reclassification of a position is covered **only** when the reclassification is due to erosion of duties and *both* the following two *additional* conditions exist:

- The downgrading action will take effect after an agency has formally announced a RIF in the competitive area
- The RIF will occur (be effective) within 180 days after the downgrading action is taken

All other reclassification actions are specifically excluded from RIF coverage (e.g. application of new standard, correction of a classification error, or erosion of duties when a RIF is not going to occur with 180 days).

Often, “**reclassification**” is confused with “**reorganization**” as the reason a RIF is requested. “**Reorganization**” is the planned elimination, addition, or redistribution of functions or duties in an organization. Reorganization may be small and involve only one position in an organization, or it may be large and involve the movement or restructuring of many positions. As long as the reorganization resulted from a program decision and not because of personal reasons (such as reprisal against an employee or because of an employees performance problems) is may be a reason for RIF. Providing, one or more employee will be separated or downgraded as a result of the reorganization. Appellate review by the Merit Systems Protection Board has support agencies using RIF to reorganize when:

- They’re an actual abolishment of a position (see *Casselli v. Army*, 27 M.S.P.R. 195, 1985)
- There is clearly the redistribution of some or all of the duties and responsibilities associated with the abolished position (see *O’Connell v. Health and Human Services*, 21 M.S.P.R. 257, 1984)

Another concern CPFs should have when considering RIF procedures to place individuals because their positions have been reclassified at a higher grade is the agency (AF) guidance on upgrading positions through classification. AFMAN 36-203, Table 2.4 rules 1 and 4 prohibits the use of RIF procedures in certain situations when a position is upgraded. You may **not** use RIF to place surplus employees when their positions are upgraded and the new position is a successor position, or when there is no significant change in duties and responsibilities from the former position, when the incumbent is qualified and eligible to be promoted.